

CHAPTER III

HISTORICAL GENESIS

As pointed out in the preceding chapter, Thailand⁵⁶ stands unique in the heart of the Indo-Chinese Peninsula. While its neighbors fell easy preys to western colonialism, it had successfully maintained its independence and sovereignty. This has often been attributed to the intrinsic value of the national character of its people and particularly to the able strategy and diplomatic astuteness of its leaders.

The Philippines, on the other hand, did not escape western imperialism. For about three centuries and a half, the Filipinos were engaged in a continuous struggle for freedom. The Philippines before 1946, under international law was not competent to handle its external affairs. Consequently, such were conducted by the Spaniards during the Spanish regime and by the United States during the American regime. As a corollary, Thailand being sovereign all the

⁵⁶The official name of the country was changed from Siam to Thailand in 1939; back to Siam in 1945 and to Thailand again in 1949. For the sake of consistency and clarity, Thailand will be used throughout this chapter including those periods when Thailand was known as Siam.

time had to deal with its equals, e. g. Spain and the United States.

For convenience in discussion, the history of the Philippines may be divided into the following periods; (1) pre-colonial period (before 1521-1584); (2) the Spanish regime (1585-1898); (3) the American regime (1898-1946) and the period of statehood (1946-onwards).⁵⁷

For the purpose of correlating Philippine history with that of Thailand, the following eras in Thai history are mentioned: (1) Nanchao Era (648 A.D.-1254); (2) Sukhothai Era (1254-1350); (3) Ayuthaya Era (1350-1767); (4) the Bangkok Era (1767-1932); and (5) the Constitutional Era (1932-onwards).⁵⁸ The first four kingdoms were named after their respective capital cities and the last one after the type of government established.

A. BEFORE WORLD WAR II

Pre-colonial Era

Contact between the Philippines and Thailand dates back to the fourteenth century before the re-discovery of

⁵⁷Zaide, Gregorio F., Philippine Political and Cultural History (revised edition, Manila: McCullough Printing Co., 1957), Volume II, p. 361.

⁵⁸Wendell, Blanchard, et.al., Thailand: Its People, Its Society, Its Culture. (New Haven: HRAF Files, Inc., 1958), p. 21.

the Philippines by Ferdinand Magellan in 1521. Thailand and the Philippines then were parts of a rich trade in the Orient. This is attested to be historical evidence.

Before the coming of the Spanish conquistadores, the Philippines had commercial intercourse with neighboring countries like Japan, China, Thailand, Indonesia and Malaya to a considerable degree.⁵⁹

When Magellan and his fleet landed at the port of Cebu in 1521, they saw a Thai trader with his junk loaded with gold and slaves.⁶⁰ Magellan sent his men ashore with an interpreter to negotiate with Rajah Humabon, King of Cebu for the purchase of merchandise and to make friends. The Rajah demanded tribute from the former who refused to do so. Rajah Humabon insisted to exact tribute and to prove the validity of the condition he was imposing introduced the Thai trader as having paid him such. A fight was about to ensue when the Thai trader intervened and admonished the Rajah of the greatness and power of Spain. The Rajah believed what the trader said and welcomed Magellan and his men without paying the customary tribute. There followed the usual blood compact and exchange of gifts.⁶¹

⁵⁹Philippine International, Vol. V, No. 4, p. 21.

⁶⁰Zaide, Op. Cit., Vol. I, p. 43.

⁶¹Alip, E. F., Political and Cultural History of the Philippines, (rev. ed., Manila: Alip & Brion Publicationa, 1952), Vol. I, p. 164.

A tangible proof of the earliest commercial relations that existed between the Philippines and Thailand was the excavation of Swankalok pottery in Kalatagan, Batangas, Philippines. The objects described as a small jar, a goblet and a candlestand had been handed over to the National Museum of Thailand. According to H. H. Prince Suphatradit, curator of the National Museum, all three objects are typical of the Sukhothai era and of thousands of pieces of Celadon and Chalieng ware exported from Sukhothai and Swankalok.⁶²

Spanish Regime

The importance of the Philippines as a colony to Spain was manifested in the conduct of diplomatic and commercial intercourse between the latter and Asian countries right on Philippine shores.

The first colonizers from Spain witnessed the flourishing of foreign trade, particularly free trade with Mexico. Hence, no duty was imposed on imported goods and Manila became a free port. In the long run, this resulted in the loss of business for Spanish merchants in Mexico whose trade lagged behind from competition in Manila. The Spanish government consequently issued a series of decrees restricting foreign

⁶²Bangkok World, Magazine Section, September 29, 1963, pp. 2-3.

trade and levying import duties again. The laws provided among others, that only government-owned galleons loaded with quotas could sail the Pacific. Trade with Oriental countries was placed under strict government regulation and direction.⁶³

In the later part of the eighteenth century when the principle of laissez faire gained general acceptance, Spain realized the impossibility of isolating the Philippines from international trade and thus, relaxed its mercantilist policy. In 1769, foreign ships were again permitted to dock in the port of Manila.⁶⁴

There is also historical proof to show that the two countries could have had some semblance of diplomatic relations in the period 1593-1656.⁶⁵ Spain dreamt of establishing an empire in the Orient through the subjugation of the Indo-Chinese Peninsula. Hernando de los Rios Coronel, a Spanish missionary wrote King Philip to send an expedition to Asian countries and particularly mentioned Thailand as being very rich and could be conquered by a thousand men.⁶⁶

⁶³Zaide, Op. Cit., Vol. I, pp. 62-63.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 234.

⁶⁵Ibid., pp. 64-65.

⁶⁶Ibid.

In the conquest of Cambodia by Thailand in 1593, two Portuguese prisoners were detained. One of whom was Blas Ruiz Hernan de Gonzales who was ordered by the King of Thailand to open up diplomatic and commercial relations in Manila with Spain.⁶⁷

While the mission was at sea, de Gonzales and his men overpowered the Thai crew, seized the junk together with its cargo and sailed to Manila. In Manila, he met another Portuguese by the name of Diego Belloso, who was sent by King Phra Unkar of Cambodia to solicit the friendship of Spanish governor-general Perez Dasmaringas. Apparently, the primary motive of King Phra Unkar in sending Belloso to Manila was to ask for help against (sic) the King of Thailand who had earlier threatened him.⁶⁸

While Hernan de Gonzales was left in Manila, Belloso went back to Cambodia. To his surprise, he found a new monarch--the King of Thailand. He was captured but eventually released on the condition that he accompanied a Thai envoy to Manila to bring two elephants as gift to the Spanish governor.⁶⁹

⁶⁷de Morga, Dr. Antonio, Historical Events of the Philippine Islands (Manila: Jose Rizal Centennial Commission, 1962), p. 38.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 39.

⁶⁹Ibid.

In 1624, However, Thailand signed a treaty of allegiance with Netherlands, an enemy of Spain. Relations between Spain and Thailand was not only Strained. A punitive expedition was sent from Manila to Thailand but was unfortunately annihilated by the Thai army.⁷⁰

Friendly relations were revived during the governorship of Juan Niño de Tabora. King Prasart Thong of Thailand sent an emissary to Manila to conclude a treaty of commerce and amity with Spain in 1627.⁷¹ Three years later, a Thai envoy was sent to reciprocate the sending of Spanish representative in the previous year who negotiated the establishment of a Spanish shipyard in Thailand.⁷² In 1658, the King of Thailand sent to Manila another envoy who negotiated a commercial treaty with Spanish authorities.⁷³

The year 1718 witnessed the second half of friendly relations between Spain and Thailand. Governor Fernando de Bustamante Bustillos appointed his nephew, Gregorio de Bustamante Bustillos as chief of a Spanish mission to Ayuthaya for the conclusion of a treaty of commerce. A treaty was as such concluded under which the Spaniards were granted the

⁷⁰Zaise, Op. Cit., p. 235.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 239.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Ibid.

option to build shipyards at either banks of the Chao Phraya River and under which Thailand agreed to supply Spain with teakwood at reasonable prices.⁷⁴

The American Regime

The end of the Spanish-American War resulted in the conclusion of the Treaty of Paris on December 8, 1898 by virtue of which Spain ceded the Philippines to the United States. Similarly, after the transfer of sovereignty, the United States controlled the external relations of the Philippines while giving it a little free hand that gradually increased in local government.

During the early years of American rule, there were marked events to show the development of closer relations with Thailand. For instance in 1918 during the reign of Rama VI, the first of an increasing number of Thai students enrolled in the College of Agriculture, University of the Philippines in Los Baños, Laguna. Outstanding alumni of the University of the Philippines in Los Baños are Mr. Insri Chantrasatit, rector of Kasetsart University, Thailand's agricultural college, Dr. Panom Smitanonda, head of the

⁷⁴Kridakon, S. "A Historical Survey of the Foreign Relations of Thailand," Unpublished Thesis: University of Manila, 1960), pp. 18-19.

Department of Agricultural Extension of the same university and Dean Charat Sunthorasing of the Faculty of Agronomy.⁷⁵

The first formal step, however, leading to the establishment of official intercourse was the founding of the first Thai consulate-general in Manila with Mr. Eugene Perkins, an American businessman as honorary consul-general. The consulate was founded in 1935⁷⁶. The first consulate-general of the Philippines in Thailand was established much later in 1948 with Mr. Enrique M. Garcia as consul-general.⁷⁷

The Japanese Occupation

The American regime in the Philippines was interrupted by the short-lived occupation of Manila by the Japanese during World War II.

Meanwhile on December 8, 1941, the Japanese troops landed without any warning in the Gulf of Siam. Thailand woke up on that morning to find out that several troops were already on its shores. The Japanese Ambassador in Bangkok handed a note to Prime Minister Pibul Songgram to make a choice between allowing the Japanese troops to go to Burma and Malaya through Thailand or declaring war against Japan.

⁷⁵Kasetsart University, Department of Information, Bangkok: Thailand.

⁷⁶Philippine Embassy, File, Bangkok: Thailand.

⁷⁷Ibid.

There was no alternative but to give in or else the "martyrdom of an independence which had been preserved through worst imperialism" would have been perilously at stake.⁷⁸

While Thailand signed a treaty of friendship and cooperation with Japan and subsequently declared war against the Allies, certain underground movements were maintained.

A parallel is seen in the role played by the puppet government established in the Philippines under the late Dr. Jose P. Laurel while the legitimate Commonwealth government remained in exile in Washington, D.C. There was no alternative but to have its establishment or else more lives and property could have been destroyed and taken by the Japanese.

Thailand, having allied itself with the Axis was the first state to give due recognition to the Philippine puppet government. Representatives of both governments crossed paths in the round-table conference in Tokyo on November 5, 1943,⁷⁹ held for the purpose of elaborating on the "Greater East-Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" envisioned by Japan and of making an official declaration of war against the allies.⁸⁰

⁷⁸Taken by Kahin from Nicol Smith and Blake Clark, Into Siam, pp. 261-266.

⁷⁹Kahin, George McTurnan, Government and Politics of South-east Asia (New York: Cornell University Press, 1962). p. 28.

B. AFTER WORLD WAR II

The relations between Thailand and the Philippines fell from its crest immediately after the war. The Philippines was almost shattered to nothing by the last war and so, it had been particularly concerned with pulling out the country from the ravages of war. On the other hand, Thailand had to make adjustments in international relations. As mentioned earlier, it declared war against the Allied Powers.

Thailand possessed the vitally needed raw materials and particularly rice. Had it not been for this fact, it could have been treated as an Axis satellite. The "free Thai movement" under Pridi Panomyong saved also Thailand and showed valid cause why it should not be occupied by the Allied Powers. Furthermore, the United States did not consider itself at war with Thailand and so there was no need for the conclusion of a peace treaty after the war.³¹

The Philippine government in exile in the United States was restored in 1945. In the following year, national elections were held in conjunction with the provisions of the Tydings-Mcduffie Act of 1934 which promised Philippine independence after a transition period of ten years.

³⁰Alip, op. cit., p. 29.

³¹Kahin, op. cit., p. 21.

On July 4, 1946, the proclamation of Philippine independence was held in historic and solemn ceremonies at the Luneta. Manuel A. Roxas was inaugurated as first President of the Republic. Some representatives from fifty states attended the proclamation ceremony. The representative from Thailand was among them.

The inauguration of preferential trade with the United States placed heavy dependence on American trade. This had deteriorating affects so far as trade with other countries was concerned. Logically, the volume of trade with the latter decreased proportionately.

C. CURRENT DEVELOPMENT

Establishment of Diplomatic Relations

The establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries had its roots immediately after the proclamation of Philippine Independence in 1946. The Royal Thai government recognized the Philippines as early as September 21, 1946.⁸²

Negotiation for the establishment of official intercourse was initiated by Thailand. The foreign minister of Thailand on his way to New York passed by Manila and conferred with Mr. Elpidio Quirino, then Vice-President and concurrently secretary of Foreign Affairs on the exchange

⁸²Annual Report, Philippine Embassy, Bangkok, p. 3.

of diplomatic envoys. Discussions were carried on at Washington by official representatives of both governments after being held in abeyance for sometime pending receipt of instructions from respective governments.

It was not until June 1, 1949 that the first Philippine diplomatic mission, a legation, was founded in Bangkok. The legation was simultaneously elevated to embassy status with that of the Royal Thai Legation in Manila on January 1, 1956.

The following Chiefs-of-Mission have been accredited to Thailand from June 1, 1949 to January 1, 1963:⁸³

1. Mr. Domingo Imperial - Envoy Extra-ordinary and
(June 8, 1949) Minister Plenipotentiary
2. Dr. Bernabe Africa - Envoy-Extra-ordinary and
(May 16, 1951) Minister Plenipotentiary
3. Mr. Jose Alenjandrino - Envoy Extra-ordinary and
(Nov. 27, 1954) Minister plenipotentiary
4. Mr. Manuel Adeva - Ambassador Extra-ordinary
(April 9, 1956) & Minister Plenipotentiary
5. Mr. Mariano Espeleta - Ambassador Extra-ordinary
(Oct. 3, 1960) & Minister Plenipotentiary
6. Dr. Jose F. Imperial - Ambassador Extra-ordinary
(Nov. 10, 1960) & Minister Plenipotentiary
7. Dr. Jose D. Ingles - Smbassador Extra-ordinary
(Incumbent) & Minister Plenipotentiary

The first Thai legation in Manila was established in the same year as that of the Philippine legation in Bangkok.

⁸³Ibid., p. 3.

Thailand appointed Luang Bhadaravadi as first Minister Extra-ordinary and Envoy Plenipotentiary to the Philippines. He was succeeded by Nai Chitti Sucharittakul as the first Ambassador in 1956. In 1958, Air Marshal H.S.H. Prince Rangsiyakorn Apakorn took his place and has held the post since then.

The Treaty of Friendship of 1949

A fortnight after the establishment of diplomatic relations, the Philippines and Thailand concluded a Treaty of Friendship on June 14, 1949. Done at Washington, D.C., it was signed by Prince Wan Waithayakon on behalf of Thailand and Mr. Joaquin Elizalde, then Ambassador to the United States, for the Philippines.

The treaty was a re-affirmation of the desires of both peoples to strengthen enduring friendly ties between them. It provided for the following:⁸⁴

1. Peaceful settlement of disputes through mediation or arbitration;
2. Exchange of diplomatic and consular representatives and the enjoyment of rights, privileges and immunities by such on the basis of reciprocity and under international usage;

⁸⁴See Annex a for text.

3. The grant of rights to both nationals, on the condition of reciprocity "to acquire, possess and dispose of movable and immovable property, to travel, to reside and to engage in trade, industry and other peaceful and lawful pursuits subject always to the constitutions. laws and regulations promulgated by the other;" and

4. The contracting parties agreed to conclude treaties of commerce and navigation, consular rights and privileges and extradition.

The treaty was ratified according to the constitutional processes of the respective countries and the protocol of exchange was effected on November 1, 1950. The agreement is now a matter of history.

The Philippine Government expressed its readiness to negotiate and conclude a Consular Convention based on an enclosed draft in a communication addressed to the Royal Thai Government dated November 3, 1953.⁸⁵ Apparently, the Thai government was not ready. Up to the present time of writing no treaty on such or treaties of commerce and navigation and extradition as stipulated for conclusion as soon as practicable, has been realized.

⁸⁵Philippine Embassy File: Bangkok, No. 105/53.

The Air Agreement of 1953

The establishment of a commercial as well as politico-cultural link was carried out by the conclusion of the "Air Services Agreement" which was signed on April 27, 1953.⁸⁶ This agreement had been drawn up because of the realization of the benefits derived from the development of international co-operation in the field of air transportation and the conviction that this is the most expedient way of bringing nations together in a rapid process of intercommunications. By air, it would not take a jet liner three hours on a direct flight to reach Bangkok from Manila and vice versa. By standard ship taking off from the Port of Manila, a week will be sufficient time to reach the Port of Bangkok, Thailand.

In accordance with Articles I and II of the said agreement, the Philippines and Thailand commenced air services on September, 1953. Pursuant to the agreement, the Royal Thai Government through the Thai Embassy in Manila applied on behalf of the Thai Airways Limited for the operation of air service via Bangkok-Saigon-Manila-Taipeh-Tokyo route and vice versa on a weekly schedule. The application for operation of air services was granted in January, 1954.⁸⁷

⁸⁶DFA File: Manila.

⁸⁷Ibid.

The Philippine Government also applied for the Philippine Air Lines permission to operate air services via Manila-Hong Kong-Bangkok route twice a week. Air services on this route commenced in October, 1953. PAL operated flights twice a week up to June, 1955 when it had to suspend international flights due to financial limitations.

In 1957, the Thai Government applied for a new route via Bangkok-Hong Kong-Bangkok. This was granted by the Philippines in May, 1958. However, the inaugural flight of the Thai Airways Co., Ltd., was effected very much later.⁸⁸ The Philippine Government granted the Thai Airways International Ltd. the privilege to operate with limited traffic rights an air service twice a week effective from October 1, 1961. The inaugural flight of the Thai Airways International Ltd. landed at the Manila International Airport on May 19, 1962.⁸⁹

By reciprocity, the Philippine Government requested the Royal Thai Government for the resumption of PAL flights to Bangkok via Hong Kong and vice versa, using DC-8 Chartered Aircrafts from KLM. The inaugural flight of PAL to Bangkok took place on June 24, 1962.⁹⁰

⁸⁸Royal Thai Embassy File: Manila.

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰PAL Information Office.

The Baguio Conference of 1950

In 1949, the Philippines proposed to the United States the assumption of a leadership in establishing a defensive system against communist subversion for Southeast Asia in the same way that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization already guaranteed the security of western Europe. Apparently, this suggestion was not taken seriously and by-passed.

However, in 1950, upon instructions from the President Elpidio Quirino, Carlos P. Romulo pushed through with the organization of a conference in the mountain resort of Baguio City. Representatives came from seven states, namely, Australia, Ceylon, India, Indonesia, Pakistan and Thailand including those from the Philippines. President Quirino considered it timely to contribute to the peace of the world by forging a closer union among the peoples of Southeast Asia "dedicated to the maintenance of peace and freedom" in the region through appropriate methods of political, economic and cultural co-operation with one another. President Quirino's letter to the late Rajendra Prasad, then President of the Republic of India inviting him to send representatives to this conference, read in part:⁹¹

⁹¹Baguio Souvenir, 1950 (Manila: Philippines, 1950), p. 6.

The cooperative action envisaged would not take away from but would add something new to the means already available to each co-opting state, on the principle that mutual help would multiply the effectiveness of any measures of self-help already taken or being planned by each country.

Co-operative action on the regional basis finds full support and sanction in the Charter of the United Nations and has been employed by countries in other parts of the world in consonance with the principles and objectives of the United Nations. It is of the highest importance that co-operation we seek to establish would completed function within the framework of the United Nations Charter and that it would, in fact, be in furtherance of the objectives of the world organization.

The conference closed with the adoption of this general principle:

That in the consideration of the special problems of South and Southeast Asia the point of view of the peoples of this area be prominently kept in mind, by any conference dealing with such problems, that better understanding and cordial relations may subsist between the countries in the region and other countries of the world.⁹²

The Baguio Conference held from May 26-30, 1950 did not have any concrete results. Only vague and broad recommendations on socio-cultural matters were drafted. Recommendations on the economic field were limited.⁹³

⁹²Romulo, C. P., Crusade in Asia--Philippine Victory (New York: John Day Company, 1955), p. 262.

⁹³Fifield, R., Diplomacy in Southeast Asia, p. 107.

Despite these shortcomings, the Baguio Conference is supposed to have laid the stepping stone leading to the creation of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization in 1954.

The Bandung Conference of 1955

The conference at Bandung, Indonesia was held exclusively among the nations of the so-called Afro-Asian bloc. Among the twenty-four nations which attended the forum were the Philippines and Thailand. The initiative and idea of convening the nations of the Afro-Asian bloc came from the Colombo Powers--Burma, Ceylon, Indonesia, India and Pakistan.

The conference had modest but ideal aims, to wit: the promotion of goodwill and co-operation among nations of Asia and Africa; the exploration and advancement of their mutual as well as common interests; the establishment and furtherance of friendly relations; the consideration of social, economic and cultural problems and relations of the countries represented; evaluation of the position of Asia and Africa in world politics and determination of the contribution these states can make in the maintenance and development of world peace and co-operation.⁹⁴

⁹⁴Kahin, George McTurnan, The Asian-African Conference Bandung, Indonesia, April, 1955 (New York: Cornell University Press, 1956), pp. 2-3.

The Philippines was represented by Carlos P. Romulo. Mr. Romulo defined the issues to be considered as "colonialism and political freedom, racial equality and peaceful economic growth".⁹⁵

On the other hand, Thailand was represented by Prince Wan Waithayakon. Prince Wan stressed that his country is not indifferent to the political aspirations of Asian countries as alleged but that it is very much concerned about them. The reason why Thailand had accepted to attend this conference is because it believes in the promotion of the well-being, both social and economic, of the peoples of Asia and Africa and the ultimate goal of promoting world peace and security through world understanding, he continued.⁹⁶

It is interesting to note the by-plays of the conference. The delegates of both Thailand and the Philippines joined hands in recounting similar experiences related to subversive activities being undertaken by the Communists and defended the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization as a machinery for collective self-defense and not for aggressive or provocative means.⁹⁷

⁹⁵Selected Documents of the Bandung Conference (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1955), p. 12.

⁹⁶Asia-Africa Speaks from Bandung (Djakarta, Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1955), p. 130.

⁹⁷Romulo, C. P., The Meaning of Bandung (Chapel Hill: University of California Press, 1956), p. 27.

Although most of the proposals made at this conference have remained in black and white and had not been carried out vigorously, the Bandung Conference is another milestone in the development and cultivation of co-operation on a regional basis.

The Royal State Visit

The historical development and the contemporary relations of the two countries are highlighted and capped by the state visit of King Bhumiphol Adulyadej and Queen Sirikit of Thailand to the Philippines from July 9-14, 1963. The first reigning monarchs to set foot on Philippine soil, Their Majesties were received warmly by the Filipino people.

At the state dinner given in honor of the royal couple, the King was conferred the Order of Sikatuna with the rank of Rajah, highest decoration given by the Philippines to Heads of States while the Queen was awarded the Golden Heart Presidential Award. President and Mrs. Diosdado Macapagal received and were decorated with the Order of Rajamittraborn and the Most Illustrious Order of Chula Chom Klao respectively. The royal visitors were treated to a Filipino fiesta where they wore Filipino costumes.

Other activities of Their Majesties included separate visits to the Boys Scout of the Philippines and the Philippines Red Cross, to the University of the Philippines and the Centro

Escolar University where they were conferred with honorary degrees, a private jazz session for the King where he dedicated his own composition entitled "When" to the Filipino people and trips to the International Research Institute in Los Banos and Baguio City, summer capital of the Philippines. While in Los Baños, a new specie of the Doñas was named after Queen Sirikit.

The visit, although a social one was significant because of its timeliness, the political and cultural affinities existing between the Philippines and Thailand and the convergence of objectives in foreign policy to a pro-western one, as pointed out elsewhere.



ศูนย์วิทยทรัพยากร
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย